



1120 Connecticut Ave. NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-0166 Fax 202-857-0162

GABRIELA CHAVARRIA, PH.D.

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Statement of Gabriela Chavarria, Ph.D.
The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Before the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans; Forest and Forest Health; and
National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
of the House Committee on Resources

March 14, 2002

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (the Foundation) is prohibited from testifying on behalf of specific legislation but appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement as it relates to the growing problem of invasive species on both public and private lands.

The Foundation is a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, authorized by Congress in 1984 to conserve fish, wildlife, and plants, and the habitats on which they depend. We have funded nearly 5,000 projects and leveraged over \$175 million in federal dollars for more than half a billion dollars in funding for

on-the-ground conservation, conservation education, and organizational capacity building. The Foundation is non-partisan and does not support lobbying, political advocacy, or litigation. The Foundation's primary conservation ingredient is its grantees and other partners -- the hundreds of federal, state, tribal, corporate, and private organizations that have leveraged federal dollars, identified the worthy projects, and conducted the conservation projects. In particular, our core federal agency partners provide vital matching funds through its appropriations and budgets, and invaluable program direction and technical assistance. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USDA-Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Agency for International Development, Environmental Protection Agency, and USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service are the eight core agencies providing this support.

The Foundation's conservation investments have resulted in over 20 million acres of restored wildlife habitat -- an area nearly equal to the State of Indiana, and over 11,000 miles of restored streams and waterways. We have helped develop new models for private land stewardship, created new hope for countless species, and built educational programs that nurture the next generation of stewards.

The Foundation commends Congress on its efforts to recognize the silent spread of invasive and noxious plant species as one of the greatest threats to the biological diversity, ecological stability, and the economy of an increasing number of areas in the U.S. and the world. Impacts from exotic invasive species are second only to direct habitat loss as a factor in decline of fish, wildlife, and plant diversity. Of the 5,000 introduced plant species established in the U.S., 476 are scientifically recognized as pests with aggressive and invasive characteristics. Experts estimate that invasive and noxious plants have infested well over 100 million acres and the area affected continues to increase by 8 to 20 percent annually. These plants have encroached upon millions of acres, supplanting native plants, disrupting ecosystem structure and function, and infesting agricultural crops, causing billions of dollars in lost revenue.

In 1996, the Foundation, along with the Bureau of Land Management and the USDA-Forest Service, created a private/public partnership to aid in the prevention, management, and/or eradication of invasive and noxious plants and to increase public awareness of the adverse impacts. This partnership is called the Pulling Together Initiative (PTI). PTI has served as an implementation program to the National Strategy on Invasive Noxious Weeds produced in 1996 and is supported by over 100 private, federal and corporate organizations, and is now part of the National Invasive Species Management Plan.

Over the past six years, PTI has become a joint effort between the Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, the USDA-Forest Service, the USDA-Animal Plant and Health Inspection Services, and the Department of Defense. Since weeds do not respect boundaries, our agency partners recognized the need to form partnerships without borders.

To date, 220 grants have treated invasive species in 36 states and two U.S. Possessions. The PTI program has provided \$7,279,174 million in federal funds that have been matched by \$13,777,922 million in nonfederal funds, for a total of \$21,057,096 million for on-the-ground projects. A map showing the distribution of the projects is enclosed for your review (Attachment A).

PTI promotes greater cooperation among the various stakeholders to implement ecologically based strategies to eradicate, mitigate, and control harmful nonnative plant species through a voluntary and incentive-based financial assistance grant program. This program helps in the development of long-term weed management

projects within the scope of an integrated pest management strategy. An integrated pest management strategy is significant in that it includes mechanical, chemical, and biological control. Projects range from pulling yellow star thistle in Idaho, to releasing biological control agents on leafy spurge in Colorado, to selective spraying of leafy spurge in remote areas in North Dakota.

PTI provides support on a competitive basis for its public/private partnership through the formation of local weed management area (WMA) partnerships nation-wide. The significance of the WMA is to ensure that implementation of the integrated pest management approach is understood from acre to acre, parcel to parcel, state to state. These partnerships are critical in that they serve to engender public awareness and increase interest in further eradication efforts to protect, enhance, restore, and manage native habitats for native fish and wildlife.

PTI recognizes limits on federal resources and builds into its program a five-year plan of funding for individual projects. This five-year plan gives the grantee important startup monies to leverage with myriad local resources. These local resources range from volunteer labor, to chemical donations, to lending a tractor.

PTI has been effective in initiating working partnerships, demonstrating successful collaborative efforts, and building on those successes to develop permanent funding sources for the maintenance of WMAs from the involved parties.

PTI projects are not selected by the Foundation alone. They are selected by a National Steering Committee, which is comprised of twenty-two invasive weed species experts from the federal, private, and corporate sectors. A list of these members is attached as attachment B.

After six years, the success of PTI remains rooted in the principle of public/private partnerships at the national and local levels. Bringing a national presence to the invasive species issue, PTI empowers local weed management entities to be successful in their partnership efforts to fight the battle at a landscape level. With this national local backing, PTI also focuses resources on the important component of public outreach and awareness. As the general public learns more of the ecological and economical threat, they become engaged in preventing the establishment of these invasive species in their communities. Attention such as this at every level is a key precursor to a successful fight against invasive weed species.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss the issue of invasive species. We would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of this Committee, for your efforts to address this important issue. This concludes my remarks and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.



Attachment B

Pulling Together Initiative National Steering Committee

Tom Loggins Georgia Forestry Commission 5645 Riggins Mill Rd. Dry Branch, GA 31020 Tel. (478) 751-3480 Fax (478) 751-3465	Tim Playford Dow AgroSciences LLC 9330 Zionsville Road Indianapolis, IN 46268 Tel. (317) 337-4789 Fax. (317) 337-4880	Gina Ramos Bureau of Land Management 1849 C Street NW, (MS 314LS) Tel. (202) 452-5084 Fax. (202) 653-5279
Alan Tasker USDA-APHIS Nat=1 Noxious Weed Program Coordinator 4700 River Road, Unit 134 Riverdale, MD 20387-1237 Tel. 301-734-5708 Fax (301) 734-5992	Deborah Hayes USDA Auditor's Building, 3 South 201 14th. Street, SW Washington, DC 20250 Tel. (202) 720-5827 Fax (202) 205-1096	Ladd Johnson Resource Management, Inc. 300 Academy Street, Ste 201 Cambridge, MD 21613 Tel. (410) 228-3755 Fax (410) 228-3238 and (202) 737-5031 Rmiladd@shorennet.net
Gary Smith USDA-Forest Service 333 SW 1 st Ave Portland, OR 97204 Tel. (503) 808-2914 Fax (503) 808-2469	Lee Otteni Bureau of Land Management 1235 La Plata Highway Farmington, NM 87401 Tel. (505) 599-8912 and (505) 599-8910 Fax (505) 599-8940	Jeanne Wade/ Dick Lindenmuth USDA-Forest Service Rangeland Stewardship Sidney Yates Building, 3 South 201 14 th Street, SW Washington, DC 20250-1103 Tel. (202) 205-1454 Fax (202) 205-1096

Fred Nibling/ Alberta Maez Bureau of Reclamation Denver Federal Center Building 67 P.O. Box 25007 Denver, CO 80225-0007 Tel (303) 445-3639 Fax (303) 445-6690/6465	Gabriela Chavarria National Fish and Wildlife Foundation 1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900 Washington, DC 20036 Tel. (202) 857-0166 Fax (202) 857-0162	Gary Johnston U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) Natural Systems Management Office Room 3223-MIB 1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240 Tel. (202) 208-5886 Fax (202) 208-4620
Terry Riley Wildlife Management Institute 1101 14th St., NW Suite 801 Washington, DC 20005 Tel. (202) 371-1808 Fax (202) 408-5059	Alison Dalsimer DOD, Legacy Program ODUSD(ES) EQ-LP 3400 Defense Pentagon Rm 3E791 Washington, DC 20301-3400 Tel. (703) 604-1774 Fax (703) 607-3124	William P. Greg/Randy Westbrooks US Geological Survey (USGS) 12201 Sunrise Valley Dr. Reston, VA 20192 Tel. (703) 648-4067 Fax (703) 648-4039
Herb Manig North Dakota Farm Bureau 1101 First Avenue Fargo, ND 58102 Tel. (701) 298-2200 Fax (701) 298-2210	Mike Ielmini U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Invasive Species Coordinator 4401 North Fairfax Drive-Room 612 Arlington, VA 22203 Tel. (703) 358-1744 Fax (703) 358-1929	Rob Hedberg Director of Science Policy National & Regional Weed Science Societies 900 Second Street, NE, Ste 205 Washington, DC 20036 Tel (202) 408-5388 Fax (202) 408-5385
Russ Shultz Weed Control Office 444 Cherry Creek Road Building B Lincoln, NE 68528 Tel. 402-441-7817 Fax 402-441-7148	John Randall The Nature Conservancy University of California, Davis Davies, CA 95616 Tel. (530) 753-6622 Fax (530) 752-4604	